Statement

(a) During 1996-97 till date, Government imported 17.51 lakh tonnes of wheat. In 1996-97, private traders/ public sector undertakings exported 10.94 lakh tonnes of wheat. Government is likely to import 1 million tonnes of wheat in the near future. Export of wheat during 1997-98 has been banned.

(b) Australia, Canada and Argentina.

(c) and (d) Government, after considering various factors, like augmenting availability in the country to meet the requirement for Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS), maintaining stocks according to buffer norms and to contain open market prices, authorised FCI/STC to import upto 2 million tonnes of wheat during 1997-98. Of this, STC has contracted for import of 1 million tonnes from Australia.

(e) No. Sir. However, FCI has informed STC that the wheat imported from Argentina contained more percentage of damaged grains than the specifications laid own in the contract. STC has obtained compensation for the damaged wheat from the Argentinean suppliers.

(f) As on 1-7-1997, the stock of wheat in the Central Pool was 109.90 lakh tonnes. The requirement under TPDS during 1997-98 is estimated at 75 lakh tonnes.

(g) All efforts are being made to increase production of wheat and procurement for the Central Pool. Minimum Support Price has been raised from R. 380/- Per quintal in 1996-97 to Rs. 415/- in 1997-98, and bonus of Rs. 60/- per quintal has also been given raising the procurement price of wheat during 1997-98 to Rs. 475/- per quintal. As against 81.8 lakh tonnes of wheat procured in 1996-97, around 92.60 lakh tonnes have been procured in 1997-98.

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister to this question is not stisfactory. There is difference of opinion in the Cabinet also on this issue. The Minister of Agriculture says and we also know it that there has been large inerease in the production of foodgrains in the country and there was no need of importing wheat as such. But due to wrong distribution system and wrong policy of the Government the wheat which should have been procured by the Government for its warehouses, the Government could not do that. Therefore the farmers of this country have been exploited by importing wheat and it has been imported paying exharbitant rates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, all sorts of weeds have been found in the wheat imported from Argentina and Australia and poisonous grains have also been detected therein. Therefore, I want to ask the hon. Minister as to how much increase has been there in the production of wheat and rice during the last three years and the quantity stored against the central pool with the State Governments during the last three years and the quantum of storage of wheat and rice under the union Government in the country and if it was in excess, the reasons for importing wheat and rice.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Sir, 62 lakh million toness of wheat was produced last year and this year 65 lakh million tonnes wheat has been produced. Last year 81 lakh tonnes of wheat was procured and this year procurement of wheat was 92.50 lakh tonnes.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not replied to the main question of the hon. member as to whether weeds and poisonous grains were detected in the wheat imported from Argentina and Australia ?

SHRI THAWAR GHAND GEHLOT : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, weeds and poisonous grains were found in the wheat imported from Agrentina and Australia and for which the Government had got compensation from these countries but the Government distributed the same poisonous wheat among the people of the country. Why they did so, the hon, Minister should atleast reply to this.

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the question is not specific, the answer will also not be specific. So this is not the case here. The hon. Member wanted an account of production and procurement of wheat. That I have given. How, let me also tell about the import of wheat. Last year in 1996-97, 17 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported and we have decided to import 10 lakh tonnes of wheat this year..... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Sir, though this is a very important question but the members could not get sufficient time to ask supplementary questions and we have very less time at our disposal to ask questions. Therefore, my submission is that half an hour discussion should be held on this issue. And I am giving a notice for having half an hour discussion on this .....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the hon. members ask their questions turn by turn, certainly I can reply their each and every question within a minute, but if they are going to ask questions simultaneously like this, it is not possible for me to reply to their questions..... *(Interruptions)*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Storage Capacity

*184. SHRI CHHATAR SINGH DARBAR :
SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN :

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proper arrangements for storing the foodgrains under PDS to fulfil the demand of the poor people;

(b) if so, the details of the storage capacity available for the purpose till May, 1997;

(c) whether a substantial quantity of foodgrains gets perished in the rain due to shortage of the storage capacity;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to construct more godowns or increase the existing storage capacity, State-wise, and location-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The Food Corporation of India has proper arrangements for storing the foodgrains in the Country.

(b) As on 31st May, 1997, the Food Corporation of India had a total storage capacity of 223.13 lakh tonnes. Statement-I giving State-wise storage capacity of FCI as on 1.6.97 is enclosed.

(c) and (d) There is no report of any quantity of foodgrains perishing in the rain due to shortage of the storage capacity. However, transfer of foodgrains from sound to damage category on account natural calamities for the last three years is given below :

Year	Quantity (in MTs)
1993-94	45, 786.629
1994-95	19, 126 782
1995-96	32, 719.422

(e) Food Corporation of India proposes to create a capacity of 0.88 lakh tonnes during 1997-98 as per details given in attached Statement II. There is also an on-going Plan Scheme through which assistance is given to the States under which a provision of Rs. 12.50 crores is available for the year 1997-98. Amount will be released to the States after the proposals are received from most or all the States and found to be in order.

Statement - I

State-wise storage capacity with Food Corporation of India and its percentage Utilisation as on 01.06.1997

(in lakh tonnes)

Sl. No.	State/U.Ts.	Covered Capacity		CAP Capacity (Owned+Hired)	Total	%age utilisation
		Owned	Hired			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	o.13	-	-	0.13	27
2.	Andhra Pradesh	11.82	8.61	0.40	20.83	91
3.	Assam	1.92	0.95	-	2.87	54
4.	Bihar	4.11	1.44	-	5.55	79
5.	Goa	0.15	-	-	0.15	50
6.	Gujarat	4.91	2.69	2.22	9.82	55
7.	Haryana	7.71	4.71	3.31	15.73	58
8.	Himachal Pradesh	0.09	0.16	-	0.25	151
9.	Jummu & Kashmir	0.72	0.15	0.13	1.00	55
10.	Karnataka	2.59	1.56	0.56	4.71	63
11.	Kerala	5.24	0.07	-	5.31	86
12.	Madhya Pradesh	8.21	3.89	-	12.10	51
13.	Maharashtra	11.77	2.93	0.68	15.38	42
14.	Manipur	0.13	0.01	-	0.14	19
15.	Meghalaya	0.10	0.06	-	0.16	26
16.	Mizoram	0.17	0.05	-	0.22	32

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Nagaland	0.08	0.10	-	0.18	51
18.	Orissa	2.54	1.81	-	4.35	55
19.	Punjab	21.03	26.38	14.37	61.78	68
20.	Rajasthan	7.07	1.86	2.74	11.67	45
21.	Sikkim	0.07	0.09	-	0.16	113
22.	Tamil Nadu	5.88	1.78	-	7.66	69
23.	Tripura	0.17	0.18	-	0.35	76
24.	Uttar Pradesh	14.76	6.43	4.63	25.82	44
25.	West Bengal	8.51	3.22	-	11.73	61
26.	Chandigarh	0.40	0.17	0.32	0.89	56
27.	Delhi	3.54	0.05	0.19	3.78	34
28.	Pondicherry	0.41	-	-	0.41	21
	Total	124.23	69.35	29.55	223.13	61%

Note : Includes a capacity of 32.93 lakh tonnes hired from CWC and CWCs.

Statement-II

Construction of FCI during 1997-98

Sl. No.	State	Centre	Capacity proposed to be created
1.	Karnataka	Tumkur	5.00
		Coorg	2.50
2.	Bihar	Gumla	2.50
3.	Jammu & Kashmir	Baramulla	5.00
		Srinagar	3.33
4.	Kerala	Moonangadi	5.00
5.	Uttar Predesh	Dhamora	25.00
		Roza	10.00
6.	Madhya Pradesh	Dhamtari	10.00
7.	Maharashtra	Solapur	10.00
8.	Orissa	Jharsuguda (Balijori)	5.00
9.	Nagaland	Dimapur	5.00
		Total	88.33

[English]

Criteria for Supply of Essential Commodities

*185. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken to ensure supply of essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, edible oils etc. in the States under the Public Distribution System/Revamped Public Distribution System;

(b) the criteria fixed for supply of the said food items in each State or for the supply of per-unit essential items;

(c) the States where PDS is not working satisfactorily, indicating the reasons thereof ; and

(d) whether the Union Government have issued instructions to each State to ensure distribution of essential commodities on uniform basis ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) The Public Distribution System is a joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Governments. While the Central Government has got the responsibility for ensuring the availability of PDS commodities, viz, rice, wheat, sugar, edible oils and kerosene, and their delivery to the States, the State Governments have the responsibility for ensuring their proper distribution through the network of the Fair Price Shops.

The States have also been advised to constitute Vigilance Committees at the Fair Price Shop, Taluk, District and the State levels.

The Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) has ceased to exist with the introduction of TPDS with effect from 1.6.1997.